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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-second session

Observer status for the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa in the General Assembly

Letter dated 24 May 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the provisional agenda of its sixty-second session, the item entitled "Observer status for the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa in the General Assembly".

The Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa is an international and intergovernmental organization whose main objective is to provide a comprehensive framework to combat the availability of illicit small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. It also aims to encourage and promote concrete measures to promote human security by ensuring that States parties to the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa put in place adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the possession and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum on the nature and description of the organization (see annex I) and the relevant draft resolution (see annex II) are annexed to the present letter.

I have the honour to request further that the letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Anthony A. **Andanje**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Establishment

1. The decision to establish the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (RECSA) was adopted by the Third Ministerial Review Conference on the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, which was held in Nairobi from 20 to 21 June 2005.

2. The history of the Centre dates back to March 2000, when the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, the Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) met in Nairobi. At the end of the Conference, they signed the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. The objectives of the Declaration were as follows:

(a) To provide a comprehensive framework to combat the easy availability of illicit small arms and light weapons, which contribute to the prolonged armed conflicts, political instability and armed crime in the region;

(b) To encourage a concrete and coordinated agenda for action to promote human security by ensuring that the States parties to the Nairobi Declaration put in place adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the possession and transfer of small arms and light weapons;

(c) To urge the source countries of those arms to ensure effective control of the manufacturers, traders, brokers, financiers and transporters through licensing.

3. Following the signing of the Nairobi Declaration, the Government of Kenya convened a meeting of experts in Nairobi from 6 to 8 November 2000, which prepared the Coordinated Agenda for Action on the Problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, the Implementation Plan for the Agenda for Action and budgetary guidelines. States parties to the Nairobi Declaration then undertook to establish the Nairobi Secretariat on Small Arms with the mandate of coordinating the regional Agenda for Action, including the following functions and responsibilities:

(a) Coordinating the implementation of the regional Agenda for Action, including the development of annual programmes for meeting and interactions;

(b) Coordinating and interacting with national focal points;

(c) Interacting with relevant regional and international agencies;

(d) Assisting with coordination and interaction with civil society;

(e) Assisting with the exchange and dissemination of information;

(f) Conducting and facilitating research;

(g) Identifying and applying lessons learned;

(h) Building capacity for a sustainable approach to the problem of small arms and light weapons;

(i) Coordinating interaction with the international and donor community in support of the Agenda for Action.

4. In order to fulfil its mandate more effectively, it became imperative that the Nairobi Secretariat be transformed into an intergovernmental body with its own legal personality. As a result, the Agreement establishing the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa was adopted by the Third Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration.

5. During the Conference, all the States signatories to the Nairobi Declaration, namely Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, the Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, appended their signatures on the Agreement establishing the Centre as an intergovernmental organization with an international juridical personality. This transformed the then Nairobi Secretariat on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, which hitherto had operated under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, into an independent international organization capable of transacting business in its own name.

Objectives and mandate

6. The Centre assumed the mandate of the Nairobi Secretariat. Its principal objective remains to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Nairobi Declaration of May 2000 and of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. The Centre aims to achieve that objective by executing the mandate hitherto performed by the Nairobi Secretariat on Small Arms.

7. The Centre is the subregional initiative that oversees the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. The work of the Centre is essentially to coordinate and assist member States in the implementation of the Programme of Action and of relevant resolutions and instruments related to small arms and light weapons.

External relations

8. In pursuance of its mandate, the Centre has been working closely with non-governmental organizations and other subregional, regional and international organizations, including relevant agencies of the United Nations. The Centre already has observer status with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. It also participated in the first and second biennial meetings of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action.

9. The participation of the Centre as an observer at the United Nations would serve to further enhance cooperation between the Centre and the United Nations, particularly in support of the Centre's efforts in the implementation of the Programme of Action in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. It will also broaden and deepen the Centre's interactions with countries and with regional and international organizations.

Annex II

Draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa,

1. *Decides* to invite the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.